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Summer 1923

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NOTATIONS		HENRY GOODMAN
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# CLAY ::

Volume 1, No. 4  
SUMMER, 1923

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### TO OUR SUBSCRIBERS

THIS issue CLAY rounds out the first year of its existence. Within the year the magazine has won hundreds of supporters throughout the country, attracted favorably to the idea of writers exhibiting their work without editorial intervention.

The present enlarged and improved issue is a sample of what we want to do with the magazine in its second year. Two new contributors, James Oppenheim and Lola Ridge, who need no introduction to our readers, have joined us, and others will be invited to join as soon as our size permits. In order to be able to do this we must double our circulation. Most of the subscriptions expire with this issue. ONE DOLLAR AND YOUR ADDRESS IN THE ENCLOSED ENVELOPE WILL RENEW YOUR SUBSCRIPTION. ONE SUBSCRIPTION FROM SOME FRIEND WHO MAY HAVE BECOME ACQUAINTED WITH CLAY THROUGH YOU WILL DOUBLE OUR CIRCULATION AND ENABLE US TO GIVE YOU A LARGER AND BETTER MAGAZINE.

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# CLAY

is a departure in this country but not uncommon in Europe: a literary exhibit uncensored, unharmonized, unsanctified by editorial guidance, a magazine that is merely the periodic organ and outlet of the group of writers who issue it. Instead of giving the public what someone thinks it wants, as our popular magazines do, or what someone thinks the public ought to want, as is the way of our more exclusive journals, the contributing authors of CLAY aim at just publishing their work periodically, submitting themselves to the public without any intermediary.

THEY realize that the artist in judging his own work is almost as apt to err as the editor; but they feel that the artist is more entitled to make mistakes; that it is profitable both for himself and indirectly for his public that he make his own mistakes. Each of the contributing authors of CLAY is responsible solely for his own work and is privileged to print within its pages whatever he deems worthy of himself, regardless of the opinion of his co-authors. In this way they are trying to come to that direct contact between public and artist which was a well-spring of creative inspiration in other times.

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## MOVEMENT

By LOLA RIDGE

Sky full of a soft movement, breathing in stars,

And the moon-pearl dissolving in a great vase . .

Blue-cool hills . .

Mist-cover slipping off earth—

Earth rolling over on her side . .

T'da . . tda . . flowers stand up tip-toe,

Light drawing at their roots,

As the sun, rampant, foaming at the edges,

Lays great paws upon the mountain.



## THE CALL

By ISAAC KLOOMOK

**I**T was late in the afternoon when Olga left the last doorstep on her round, seated herself wearily in her milkcart and drove home.

Prince, her little bay, was no less tired than she after a day of jogging from door to door until she had distributed her bottle of milk. Prince had not had a drop of water since he had left his stall at five in the morning. The day had been hot and dry. His eyes and nostrils had been itching with the dust of the road and the flies had stung without let-up. He had twitched his tail, lashing his flanks to rid himself of the flies, flapped his lips from time to time and lazily dragged the cart. When his mistress threatened him with her whip to remind him that he must hurry, he pulled himself up, threw out his legs, raised his steps, lifted his round buttocks toward her, to show her he was doing his utmost; in truth, however, he had little desire to run, pranced on one spot and covered little ground.

But as soon as the open fields came into view and the breeze brought the odor of green grass to his nose, he bethought himself of his pasture, of the trough of cold, fresh water that awaited him at home, and he neighed happily, sneezed the dust from his nostrils, raised his head, tossed up his mane, thrust his muzzle out several times, trying at the lines to see whether his mistress was giving him free rein and, finding himself free, he stopped tossing his buttocks, began pacing along and sped on. The nearer he drew toward home the lighter he felt at heart and easier was the road.

It was otherwise with his mistress. She let her horse have his way and gave herself up to her thoughts. The nearer she came home the heavier was her heart. Today she was very unhappy.

Every time she returned to her farm, to her sick husband, to her drudgery and to her desolation, she thought the same unhappy thoughts: her life was irretrievably lost.

AMY LOWELL

By LOLA RIDGE

Your words are frost on speargrass,

Your words are glancing light on whipped-out knives,

Your words are shapely . . . bouyant as balloons,

They make brave sallies at the stars.

When your words fall and grow cold,

Little greedy hands

Will gather them for necklets.

As a girl she had dreams of a wealthy husband, of a fine home, of a life of luxury and pleasure. But when she had begun to consider the young men who moved about her, she discovered that the possibilities of the life she had desired were remote. She had flirted with the enamoured young men but had not been in a hurry to marry.

Years passed quickly. She had to choose one of the young men she knew. Which?

Love she had for none. There were two, however, Fishbein and Blumstein, for whom she cared more than for any of the others. She was drawn to one, then to the other, vacillated, unable for a long time to decide, and at last she was engaged to Blumstein. They were getting ready to marry shortly.

Suddenly she heard the sad news that Fishbein was sick. She felt a great pity for him. They had been close to each other for a long time. It had needed so little for her to have been his bride. And now she was going to marry someone else, would be happy—and he?

She thought of it frequently. What would have happened if she had been his wife? Would she have abandoned him because of his illness? The thought did not leave her. If he had the supporting hand of a faithful woman, she kept thinking, he might become well. But he had no one near him—neither wife nor sister nor friend. What girl would dare to marry him now? If she had not kept him on the string for so long with her half-promises, he might have married long ago. He had waited for her, and she had betrayed him. And who could have so great an influence over him as she? What could she do now? Oh, if she had the courage!

And suddenly she sensed a hidden energy well up in her that surprised her. Yes, yes, she would do it!

She had thought and thought and had been unable to tear her heart from it. Gradually the thought began to send tremors through her blood, tremors of joy and exaltation. The strange call awakened and stirred her soul. For the first time in her life she felt the lure of a noble act. She felt shamed before her worthless life. What did he need her for—the healthy man? What could she do for him?

Once when she called on her consumptive friend and saw his helplessness she was moved to tears. She noted that her smile, her

soothing words eased his pain, that her moving about freshened his yellow, withered face and she felt within herself a great love, an exhaustless devotion and tenderness toward that lonely, weak man who was so greatly in need of her life and vigor.

She was one of those who are swallowed up by one emotion—who surrender heart and soul to one passion, their past and future. It seemed to her now that she had loved Fishbein all of the time and that she could never love another. A fever seemed to seize upon her body and she could not rest until she became his wife. Nor after.

The doctors advised her to settle on a farm in a dry climate. They had some money, they borrowed some more; she sold all her possessions and after a great deal of trouble they had bought the mortgaged farm upon which they had settled. They had lived there thirteen years.

She was young, energetic and feared nothing—neither hard work nor loneliness, if only she might help him. And later, even when her hopes began to vanish, when she realized that despite her efforts, despite her faithful, exhaustless attention, despite her care and labor he did not improve, she did not falter. She strained herself beyond her power only that he might live.

She succeeded. His life, although flickering like a feeble candle, would endure.

She was victorious. But at what cost! She had given him the best years of her youth. But she did not even wish to think of this. In the very instant when she had resolved to become his wife she had realized what would happen to her. She knew that she was sacrificing herself to him. This was in itself the terrifying lure that drew her to marry him, and which still had the power to drag her out of bed at dawn for a day of toil in his behalf—that he should not lack sun and fresh eggs, his glass of milk and invigorating mountain air.

Thirteen years had passed. Thirteen years, each day of which she rose before sun-up to begin her travail that sent her spent to her bed each night.

The years sped. But the days were wearily slow. Her strength was leaving her, the marrow within her bones was drying. The burden was heavy upon her. He was too weak to help her.

What drained her strength even more than her labor was her loneliness. She came to the village every day, met and spoke with people



and this stirred her longing the more. No one ever came to the farm. The nearest neighbor was miles away. They were alone twist heaven and earth.

And he, the man with whom she had lived so many years, for whom she had sacrificed her life, was a stranger—a stranger in spite of her closeness to him.

He was short in stature and had small, delicate features. His sickness had withered his face and shrivelled his body. His face had become smaller, more refined and, it seemed, younger—in spite of the gray hairs that were beginning to show at the temples. His calm eyes were hidden in a veil of sadness through which issued a kindly smile; and in his glance there was something subservient and conciliatory which awakened pity for him. Removed from people—from their praise and rewards, thinking always of his end so imminent—he had no ambitions. His innermost ego came to rest, and his inner quietude was reflected in his face. Besides, his companionship with nature throughout lonely days gave to his face the purity and loftiness of the sky, of the blue mountain peaks and distant vistas. But a strange coldness emanated from him. He was always silent. His evanescent smile seemed to ask pardon for his aloofness. When he spoke his voice was petulant and sickly, which made one think of a frail boy.

His helplessness, his weakness and quietness, his petulant complaining had awakened a sisterly feeling in her. And if ever he became cross she knew it was the caprice of a sick man. She tried to mollify him. She always approached him with a smile, spoke soothingly, never revealed her unhappiness, never sighed within his hearing. She shielded him with her pity, with goodness and tenderness—but her heart was dreary.

She never regretted what she had done. She had known she must do this. How often, however, she found herself in thought of another life—how often she thought of a house full of children's voices, of a house filled with laughter and joy, of a house in which she is the cherished one, where all things and every one waits upon her and where she might lay her head and rest.

She could not help it: these fancies came unbidden. And what pain they brought her! During the day it did not matter greatly—she was distracted by her work. But as soon as nightfall came, with

its loneliness—the profound quiet of the summer-night, when overhead the starry sky stretches endlessly away and the earth grows shadowy and sad, when the world about draws away and the heart becomes solitary—then a restlessness stirred her whole being. She would toss wearily upon her pillow but she could not sleep. With feverish eyes, with flaming cheeks, with outstretched arms, with a pulsing pain at the heart, she would move about in bed in helpless agitation. Strange thoughts tortured her. Through her mind came a drift of fantasies that afflicted her. A miasma of yearning rose from the depths of her being. A nostalgia of the soul, a longing for impossible happiness. If only she could escape! Of a sudden she would rise from bed, walk out barefoot upon the wet grass, run about in the black field while her heart beat—beat noisily.

With head bent she reentered the house. She approached her husband's bed, stood looking at the pale, childlike face, listened to his weak breathing and moved away to her own bed, humiliated and impoverished.

The next morning she arose fatigued, in cold perspiration—fever tonguing her bones. She was haggard. Blue circles ringed her eyes that glowed with a resentful fire. She began to think she was growing sick. Perhaps she was on the same road with her husband? She smiled to herself, a bitter, painful smile.

Once, in an hour of unbearable anguish, she sat down and wrote to Blumstein, her former lover, pleading that he should come to her.

The next morning there was a crystalline restfulness within her. She began to wait for her guest as one awaits a great happiness. She had no regrets. She began to prepare for his coming like a young wife for her husband who has been away a long time. The days sped in dreams. She recalled the time when she had been affianced to him. Waiting thus, she recalled all the past—all her youth. She freshened up and became again lithe. Her eyes brightened anew with their old time sparkle and her blood was in ferment. The glow of passion came frequently into her cheeks. She began to go about with lowered eyes and with a smile on her lips. She dressed up for her trips to the village. She found herself looking after the young, well-dressed men whom she met and the furtive masculine glances turned on her thrilled her.

She marvelled at the freshness of her life. Her former energy

and power returned to her. Work was no longer hard.

Daily, on getting to town, she would go to the Post Office for the letter from him and daily she opened her box with anxious heart. On finding the box empty she went about all day unable to suppress her disappointment. But she did not cease hoping.

One day she found a letter from him. Fanned, she threw herself upon the letter. She read it, but did not know what she was reading and did not know whether to be disappointed or happy. With feverish eyes and hungering heart she probed each word. No, she had expected more. Did the warmth she felt emanate from the letter, or was it from her own heart? She was intoxicated. A tumult of joy broke within her and spread throughout her being. She went about all morning with her milkcart from house to house, delivered milk, spoke with her customers, smiled, laughed, and in truth did not know where she was nor what she did.

When she started on the return home and Prince took to the well-known road, she came to herself and her heart became heavy. She was amazed at herself. What had made her so joyous? What had happened?

Suddenly she was frightened of the whole affair. What should she do with the letter? Show it to her husband? No, she dare not do that. He would not understand. He would think she had complained of her fate to her friend—that she had told him she could no longer bear this life. This was the very thing she had done! And it was really true! How often her life was insufferable! But her husband must not know. For him she would always keep a smile. He must not suspect the truth. Now—why had she written to her friend? Why had she asked him to come to her? Why did she await his coming with such joy? In what way would he change things? How would he change her life? Then why was she so agitated over his coming? O—her life was irretrievably lost. She would have to struggle so to the grave.

But she could not calm herself. She thought and thought. The same thoughts kept revolving in her mind. She decided not to show the letter to her husband. It was best for him to know nothing about it. She was accustomed to doing things without his knowledge to spare him worry. But her conscience troubled her. Certainly she had written

nothing in the letter to her friend for which she should take herself to task. She had said nothing wrong in the letter. But she could not forget that certain thoughts and feelings actuated the letter. Was she as sure that these thoughts and feelings had not found voice in her letter? Had she not given Blumstein ground for all sorts of expectations? How shameful! How shameful! Otherwise, why should he come so quickly?

And suddenly her thoughts, like a waterway held in by a dam, broke through and overbore her with passion.

"Well, what of it! What of it!" she triumphed over herself. It was apparent in his letter that he loved her still, that he had not forgotten her, that he was attentive to her bidding. He had heard her whisper and would come to her. That was what she had wanted. That was the cause of her happiness.

What a long time since they had seen each other, she thought. He would not recognize her now. He would not know her at all. Perhaps he thinks her still as young and beautiful as when she was to be his bride. Thirteen years ago! What has happened to her in that time? No, no—she must not think about it. But why not? Could she not look back proudly upon the years that had vanished?

But her appearance! Her youthful looks gone, puffed rings under her eyes, her skin yellow and bitten by sun and rough weather, and her red, coarse hands and ruined gaunt figure—how would she appear before him? The years had wasted her!

Her thoughts frightened her. No, no—surely she had not thought these thoughts when she had written to him.

But what would happen when he came? They had been lovers. He had loved her so. Often, even now, she would awake with his hot breath upon her cheek. Had he forgotten? She had heard he had a pretty wife. And yet—he was coming at her first intimation.

But God, God, what silly things turned her head. Could she not rid her mind of these witless fancies? Would she now destroy all that she had builded so painfully through the years? No, she must take hold of herself. There was so much work to do. She must not permit herself to waste time in empty day-dreams. She had so much to do!

"Gee-up, Prince!"



Olga had hoped that when she got home, when she took up her chores, when her eyes rested again upon all that had grown up under her hands, when she was beside her husband for whom she had done so much, her heart would grow calm. The upheaval caused by the letter would settle again and things would be again as they had been. Her life, formerly so hard, now held the fascination of peace and restfulness.

But she could no longer find peace. The fever kindled by the letter did not leave her. She turned impetuously from one task to another. She found work that had been neglected, that was incomplete and that had waited doing. In the feverish days that followed she made a thousand plans to enlarge the farm, to improve the irrigation-works, to extend her dairy. She discovered a leak in the roof of the main-house and had that repaired. She sold a few of the old cows and bought new ones. She discovered suddenly that her farmland, a Pole, was very lazy; that Prince was too old; the cows were neglected; the hay crop was a failure; the doors could not be opened; the stove refused to burn; the axe would not chop. She was dissatisfied with everything. She did not rest, she could not stay idle for a moment.

In truth, however, she was always exhausted and weary. Every step was a burden. If she was on her feet she wanted to sit; if she was seated she wanted to stand up. She could find no place for herself. And all of the time that she bustled and hurried about she heard a clear voice within herself whispering, "You know that all of this is sham, that all of this is useless; that you hate—hate everything—the whole work, and yourself most of all. And you cannot escape from yourself."

This doubt of her own power was the hardest to contend with. She had always believed in her self-determination. But now she was helpless. She had betrayed herself. She did not recognize her own thoughts and feelings. She thought what she did not want to think and felt what she did not wish to. The whole structure of her life had shaken loose.

Then Blumstein came. Olga met him at the station. She hardly recognized him. He had changed completely, or, at any rate, she had expected someone else. At the first glance she directed toward him her heart sank. What had she to do with this well-fed complacent stranger? When she held his heavy, moist hand she felt he was repu-

sive to her. His churlish laugh enraged her. She felt like screaming. She was miserable. She struggled to awaken within herself an interest in him as in a friend but she could not. His talk neither attracted nor interested her. His silence insulted her. His laugh soiled her. What humiliation. If only she might run away.

She had to explain that she could not have him come home with her. She had not told her husband anything. She would leave him at the hotel. He was not surprised and this offended and hurt her. She was entangled in her own words and blushed at every word. The shame—the intolerable shame!

When she got home she went about depressed. She could not eat. She could not drink. She had a headache and was feverish. There was a clogging in her throat. Tears flowed from her eyes. She found a corner and wept.

She wept the whole day. At night, when her husband was asleep, she bathed her eyes in cold water, washed, dressed herself in her best and went to Blumstein.

Dawn was coming up when she came back. She was weak and could hardly walk straight. She did not think. She did not feel. Her eyes were blinded with an empty, lifeless stare.



## THE SONG OF SONGS

By ALTER BRODY.

Shut the Book,

You are my Song of Songs tonight—

My own Shulamith,

Sweet as the swarthy rose of the East,

That unfolded her petal'd body to her lover,

On a warm-breathed night,

Three thousand years ago.

Let us open the window instead

And look only at the unbosomed heart of the sky

Tingling with stars;

And the awed heads of the striped trees

On their ancient rock between the tenements.

Forget this gaslit hall-room on the avenue

Startled by fitful trolleys rumbling between it and the park.

Forget the wary tenements watching the sleeping rock

From stray lit windows.

Forget that you and I are part of this.

Two bubbles in the seething boiler of this huge machine;

Two sparks from this dynamo of brick and steel,

Spoked with streets and subways, hooped with pier-studded rivers,

Whirling futilely under the wondering stars.

Only the sky is here tonight—

The raw sky and the earthy trees.

Drink with your eyes this blue ecstasy foaming over with stars

That it may hang over us for a roof all night!

Draw into your soul these thin timid trees,

The pensive orphans of the summer,

Receding into the black shadow of the rock

From the bold-eyed lamp-lights.

Let them bloom there tonight

And blot these papered partitions with green leaves!

"The beams of our house are cedar and our rafters of fir . . ."

Close the window.

Shut the dreamy-lidded shutters against the sneering light:

"Let us go forth into the fields . . ."

Your eyes are like over-full cups

Tremulous with wine,

Your lips call me with a kiss,

Soft as sleep and irresistible as death,

Drawing our bodies together like fluid lodestone,

Pulling through a thousand throbbing veins.

Say the old words again,

The exhaled perfume of a faded rose

Blown to us from the centuries

Through the dreams of a million lovers:

"Come, my Beloved!

Let us go forth into the fields . . ."

Let us get up early to the vineyards . . .

There will I give thee my love . . ."

This creaking couch shall be our green bed.

Put out the hissing gas.

Your brown breasts shall be moons of mellow light

For my flushed eyes.

Your body shall be field and vineyard for my own—

Field and vineyard in the wine-press of our limbs—

Vineyard and vintage!

## THE DISMAL HEATH

By JAMES OPPENHEIM

NOW again Stanner came to the dismal heath which so often in his dark imaginings he had crossed. A brown upland at dusk, with gnarled bushes and a naked tree or two, with muddy tracks, and close-cropped grass and gray rocks. A place forsaken. And on it, on a hillock, a bowed telegraph pole standing like a black crucifix. In the west the light was fading, but also in the west a distant city was flaming. A city of mills. A city of roaring foundries. A city of night fires. Where men were in the machinery, engine driven. Where there was dirt and the dark mind. Where flame only made darkness.

And winds of November, dismal wailing winds, prowling in the bushes and whistling along naked boughs, caught Stanner in the face, and he made his way through one of the elements. And, as ever, true to the vision, he saw an old wanderer blowing before the wind, staff in hand, with long gusty beard and tattered clothes. And this old man lifted up his face to the torn heavens and to the darkening, and the whites of his eyes showed while his lips either supplicated or cursed. And he saw the telegraph pole, and he stopped and stared at it. Then he shook a clenched fist at the pole and he shouted:

"Oh, Christ, Christ, dost thou hang on this naked heath among the whispering wibes? Do they use thy sign for their business and thy name for their wars? Oh, doomed city against the last light of day, oh Christian hell. Great is the consuming flame that sweeps this world, crossing even the desert and the heath through wire and the air. Civilizations before now have gone down. This one shall perish."

And he stood as if in agony, rolling his eyes upward. Then he called:

"Darkness. Darkness. Thouallest on man."

And Stanner approached him.

"Here," he said, "am I, another living being out on the waste with you. Have we no words for one another? It is November of

the spirit, and cold, and the wind is wild and the heath barren. Is there no comfort we may exchange?"

"None," said the old one, "each to his own, and to me, none. For I am too old for lies, too old even for blindness. I am the Wanderer, the restless one. Look upon me and see me."

It was now quite dark, and Stanner, straining to see, beheld a terrible figure of age and eternal power. And he thought: "This is one of the Gods, and he is torn by his cleavage from man." Awe came to him and he whispered:

"Art thou he who said, 'I am that I am'?"

"I am he," said the old one, "who thundered among the tribes of the lost Dordogne. And he who appeared on the Nile. Job bowed before me. I have been called Jupiter and Jehovah. I am one of the Great Eternals, and close to man. When man turns from me, I suffer a death. The agony of that severance convulses me. Earth shakes. There is fire and flood and pestilence and war. And when man turns toward me, I am at peace, and he is charged with my power."

And Stanner groaned:

"By what means shall he now turn back? Is it the Crescent, the Lotus Flower, is it the Cross?"

"No," said the old one, "it is nothing that has been. He must die until the path opens."

"Then we are doomed," said Stanner.

"Doomed?" repeated the old one.

And as Stanner proceeded further to question him, the darkness obliterated that figure, and the wind grew to a hurricane and the distant city flared against the blackness. And Stanner went on, dashing against the wind, looking for his comfort.



## THE BUTTON

By HENRY GOODMAN

**T**HE accident of motherhood, for with Manya this was the result of violence and assault, did not find her either bewildered or unprepared. With the same calm in which she went about her task of harvesting in the fields outside of her village, she went about the delivering of the child and the getting rid of the boy. As to the last, Lieutenant Fiodr Petronitch could never afterwards forgive himself for having failed to take Manya's calmness into mind.

Manya, sturdy of body and firm of hand, as she stood in her long loose wrap that revealed strong round calves and outlined firm thighs, was a picture that attracted almost without exception all the males of the village. But unlike the result of their attraction to Senya, Manya's friend, the men did not dare make advances to her, for did they not remember, as peasants remember a folk story, the terrible slap of her hand which had laid Dvovid unconscious for two days, when, being drunk, he had sought to become familiar with her?

Perhaps it was this very story, added to the sense of guarded prowess that possessed Manya at her work in the fields, that attracted Lieutenant Fiodr Petronitch of the Royal Guards and decided him to win and have Manya. The fact is that on the same day in which the lieutenant rode into the village at the head of his company which had been billeted on the peasants, Fiodr, seeing Manya swinging her scythe and swaying her strong, full-breasted body in buoyant rhythm, set her apart in his mind as one who would recompense him for the distasteful change from garrison life at Kharkov to the rapid inactivity of this Cossack village. Besides, she looked like a girl who could help him forget his rejection by Sophia Lentine.

He stopped a peasant on the road, asked who "that" was, pointing to Manya, and then asked where she lived. Then dispatching his man, Alexiff, to Manya's home to arrange for his quarters there, he rode on into the village to see that his men were well

received. He winked to Second Lieutenants Vladimir and Leon who smiled back in understanding after a glance at Manya.

In the village the lieutenant heard the story of the slap. It was after he began making veiled inquiries about Manya. Among the men he heard her referred to as the "Colt" and discovered that the name had come to her from the manner in which she had defended herself against those men who had dared approach her in the fields. He thought the name a good one, if what the men said was so, for he had sensed in her, even from his distant view, a kind of animal calm and self-possession that fitted in with his observations of a colt at pasture. There was that freedom and leisurely ease of motion which was instantly changed to straining alertness in the case of the unbridled animal. He would bridle her, he thought, and smiled.

If Lieutenant Fiodr thought his inquiries veiled sufficiently well to mislead or avert suspicion, he was mistaken. Men foiled in an object have a peculiar intuition regarding the efforts of others towards the attainment of the same object. Besides, one look at the smoldering eyes of the lieutenant and another at his careful stroking of his moustaches and his brushing back of his hair, was enough to reveal him as he did not want to be revealed. So it was that soon the story got abroad that the lieutenant had cast eyes on the "Colt," and with the nature of such stories, it sped to the fields and reached even the ears of Manya.

Senya it was who told Manya. Senya, nicknamed, "Grand-mother," by the men because of her terror of their lustful glances and approaches and because of her fear of showing a bare arm or leg when she walked through the village street, was filled with alarm for Manya. Her terror could not have been more real if she had thought herself the object of a projected assault. She rushed to Manya's side in the field and related the rumor.

"Manya," she began breathlessly, "Manya, do you know—those soldiers—"

"Well—so what about the soldiers?"

"Their officer—a lieutenant—they say he's been asking about you—talking to those men."

"So let him talk his tongue loose."

"But don't you know, Manyà, what fellows these officers are? He'll come upon you in the field and before you know it he's—"

"But what of my scythe and my arms? And I can kick, I tell you."

Manyà's gesture was reassuring. Her arm flexed and the muscles stood out, glistening bronze. As if to assure herself, she drew up her skirt, flexed her right leg and kicked viciously.

"Let him come if he wants to," she said.

But though her voice sounded calm and devoid of feeling, her eyes, when they met those of the lieutenant, gleamed anger and a warning.

Lieutenant Petronich was in the room when Manyà returned from the field, her scythe on one shoulder, a tremendous bundle of hay on the other. He sprang forward to relieve her of her burdens but was stopped by her loud order:

"Hey, hold off there. I did this before you came around."

And with a deft, easy turn of her hand she lifted the scythe from off her shoulder and thrust it into a corner and as easily lifted the bundle of hay to the ground.

"Go you and swing your toy sword," she added for consolation.

There followed a season of subtle effort on the part of Lieutenant Fiodr to break down the barrier of Manyà's suspecting watchfulness. The lieutenant, long expert in those arts which win men ingratiation with the ladies of garrison towns, brought into play all his little kindnesses with Manyà for their unheeding and unfriendly object. He began by instructing Alexiff to bring daily the best of the fruits displayed in the village markets, for an offering to Manyà's parents. It was as if he thought that by a siege of kindness and generosity he would wear away the cold reserve of Manyà. He managed so, that whereas the other peasants in whose homes his men were quartered complained of the troops, if only out of habit, Manyà's parents, peasants of similar prejudices against the soldiery, not only overcame their prejudice but even learned to speak with pride of "their" soldier—the lieutenant. In fact, sensing the lieutenant's attentiveness to Manyà they chuckled with pride as their eyes glowed before the sight of Manyà's fulsome figure.

"Ah, those soldiers—those soldiers—leave it to them—they know

what is good."

It was in good-natured jest they spoke, but it was a jest that angered Manyà and brought a glowering light into her eyes.

Following the habit of his mind which was military and even simple, Lieutenant Fiodr thought, one evening, that now his preparations had been laid, it was time to go on with the main plan—the taking of Manyà. It must be said for the lieutenant, that, although he was rather primitive in his understanding, he was himself aware that his preparations had met with unqualified defeat. But this in no wise detracted his attention from the further carrying out of his project. His unguarded boasting and intimations made to his second lieutenants, came back as new incentives which would have driven him on, even had he meant to raise the siege. This he did not, by any means, mean to do. And the reasons were to be found in his growing desire of Manyà.

This feeling was nourished in devious ways. First, Manyà's disregard which was growing painful to the lieutenant, had a haughty coldness in it like a high, proud wind which thought by its indifferent passage to flick out a low fire. Then there was the knowledge of the successes of the lieutenants, both of whom had found ready friendship in joyous, eager village girls.

But what acted most sharply as a goad on Lieutenant Fiodr's feelings was the humiliation he suffered when Manyà publicly refused to be his partner at a village dance even after the mediatory and diplomatic efforts put forth by the girls who were the partners of the two other officers.

This refusal was not purely out of Manyà's indifference to Lieutenant Fiodr. It was more directly because Manyà was herself falling in love.

## II.

Manyà's falling in love was a curious thing. Declared by the violent protestations of unwelcome suitors the most attractive girl in the village, she was nevertheless immune from any emotional exaltation such as inspired the furious, rapid courtships to which she had been subjected. Held in the universal esteem and desire of the males of the



village, she had come to hold in violent disdain almost all the men who sought her.

But Valodja the Blind, who looked upon life with his one green eye that seemed to fasten its indifference as a label on the world, was the exception. In himself he was exceptional in that the world was of a piece to him. Rains might come and inundate the valleys and wash out the seeds of his planting. The one eye blinked at the grey heavens, took in the brown running earth, and held up its green indifference as a reflection of what went on in Valodja. Sun, vibrating and insistent, might lay itself out over the hills and growing flats and drink the moisture of the soil and the sap from the uplifting plants. Valodja looked out, saw green, shimmering stalks and leaves turn yellow with premature exhaustion. His eyes blinked and sent out its message—indifference. But his hands, gigantic, gnarled flats, were never at rest. Morning came—a thin gray line turning white over the hills—Valodja's hands began their endless motion. Now it was lifting a barrel of potatoes to the buckboard. Now it was plowing, or sowing or going down to the forest for the day to lay in a new stock of wood, or carrying his sheep, legs tied fast, down to the slaughter house. All things he did in an encompassing silence. If early ripening and a multiplicity of crops pleased him, no one knew for Valodja's speech was almost wholly in his eye and that said one thing—indifference. If a destructive windstorm, followed by snow which resulted in the killing off of his sheep, stirred resentment within Valodja, no one could tell, none could sympathize, nor yet gloat, for who knew what was back of that silent, green and unruflled eye?

To one other person he was indifferent with a steadfast, deliberate indifference—to Manya. If, looking at her when he strode by in his dust-caked, big shoes, he was pleased by the warm, undulating lines of her moving body, neither word passed his mouth nor blink stirred his eye. Like the sunshine before him on the road, or the rain beating down on his roof, Manya seemed to fall into the one cloth of impression which was his reaction to the world.

By what poignant, stumbling yet certain, sixth sense did Manya feel something quick beneath his indifference? Perhaps it was only a stirring within herself, set a-tingle when Valodja the Blind walked by in his impassivity. As to the thing itself there may be question,

but undoubtedly it shot into her a vivid force that fastened her modest eyes on his tall, spare and virile form. It raced into her heart on a tide of eager yearning and seemed to curve covetously into her swinging, tireless arms.

Thus, in her calm, undemonstrative manner, Manya's living found for itself a new tempo: the doings of Valodja the Blind. Of these doings and goings on she had many conflicting reports for Valodja, being queer, had many chroniclers. Believing that where there is smoke there is some fire, however small, Manya was able to extract from the smoke of rumor some particles which she felt were authentic and which kept her heart informed.

She heard many stories of his new enterprise. It seemed he was building an addition to his weather-stained house. Conjectures were offered as explanations; drunken fancies as facts and idle inventions as truths. But Manya's heart thrilled and beat out its own explanation—an intense longing—Valodja was building because—because he would take her. It would be a new home for her, for along the ways of her heart had there not come encouraging messengers of her hope and yearning? Had she not begun to sense a thawing of that icy indifference when Valodja came by her in the fields? And had she not begun to sense a conscious increase in the frequency of those encounters? Besides, had not her heart, eager, laughing heart, offered up a devout explanation of why Valodja, passing her with his shoulder loads of planks, had made those loads smaller and smaller? Was it because Valodja wanted to have more frequent occasion for passing her? And if so, had she not more than once found that imperturbable, green eye directed upon her when she turned suddenly after his passing? Perhaps it was only her heart speaking—but who would discredit the testimony of the heart?

Her dislike of the lieutenant had been instinctive. But now his attentions were thoroughly distasteful and when there came the two messengers, Feda and Truda, both urged by the second lieutenants to do their best to win Manya over to becoming Lieutenant Fiod's dance partner at the village dance, Manya sent them on their way, their ears tingling with her sharp denunciations of themselves, the soldiers and their officers.

The night of the dance found Lieutenant Fiod, arrayed in pompous

sullenness. His mantle of disdain was pierced at mention of Manya by the other officers who danced merrily to the music of the fiddle and accordion. As for Manya, she had wandered in to the dance, unconcerned, had danced with Senya and some of the other girls, had refused the public invitation of Lieutenant Fiodr and had, as unconcernedly, disappeared from the dance hall. Senya suspected she had gone up the road toward Valodja's house, and the last red rays of sun found her among the trees on the hilltop from which she could yet make out the tall, industrious body of Valodja, as he fastened a roof board in the dark.

### III.

Sunlight had an intoxicating effect on Lieutenant Fiodr. Suffusing him and reaching into his very veins, it sent waves of pleasant desire through him, filling him with a vague longing that led him to poeticize things and people.

Manya, swaying her firm body in the rhythm set by her rounded, browned arms, stood in a flood of sunshine just on the edge of the woods, cutting with regular swing and sweep the rustling, tall grain. Her bosom was bared to the upper round of the breasts and as she bent forward in her work, their fullness was revealed in the flush that covered them through the vigor of her movement.

Watching her, watching the swing of her body and the trembling vibration of her breasts and seeing the golden tan of her strong legs as the sun flecked their moving muscles, Lieutenant Fiodr felt arising within himself the waves of desire that were so pleasant and seemed to send a radiation of warmth into every part of his body. He felt himself growing flushed with an eagerness to be near this sun-bathed being, to touch with his own warm hands the roundness of her body.

But he dared not approach while Senya was about. Every now and then he heard the voice of Senya calling to Manya from her place in the tall grain. Resentment stirred within him against Manya's friend who seemed to know so well what was passing in his mind. He felt anger at her that she should seem so much concerned about Manya.

He did not know, as indeed Manya herself did not, how closely Senya could follow Manya's thoughts and feelings. How should he

know that having seen him walk along the road, Senya had thought instantly of that other silent walker of the road, Valodja the Blind? How indeed should he have known, when for that matter, Manya herself was ignorant of the fact that Senya, watching her, sensed that her thoughts were not of the grain she was cutting nor of the sun that was reaching so eagerly down her bosom, but of a silent house on a hilltop where a silent man was building?

Yet it was not strange that Manya's friend should have been able to read so readily the tender awakenings within her. Calm as was Manya's manner, to Senya there was in her sudden turning of the head a hint of expectation, and the dropping of her head when Valodja passed by, was as clear in meaning as any spoken word.

This nearness to Manya it was that led Senya off on a run for Valodja when she discovered Lieutenant Fiodr making his way from the woods through the grain. She would call him and they would be back together instantly, she thought.

To Lieutenant Fiodr, watching Manya and thrilling with the thought and sight of her, the fact that Senya's voice had ceased calling, came as the word to advance. He walked cautiously back of Manya, timing his footsteps with a loud swish, swish of her scythe. He studied her body and arms and a glowing coursed through his own body. Having approached within arm's reach of Manya, he called, "Well, well, Manya, and here we are together."

Manya knew the voice and was ready to fight. She turned half way, scythe in both hands. But she had not counted on the swiftness of his next move. With a sharp lunge forward, he hurled himself at her waist and brought one hand hammerwise down on hers, holding the scythe. With a noisy rustling the scythe fell. Then, recovered from his swift onslaught, Manya ducked and kicked out in wild fury. She lifted Lieutenant Fiodr from the ground in the embrace of her muscled arms. Somehow he turned and tripped her so that she fell in the grain.

In fury he hurled himself upon her, attempting to fasten her hands in one of his. She rolled her head, lifting it from the ground and kicking up at him with her knees. He struck her a violent blow on the side of the head and straightened her body on the ground. She was almost limp. He thrust her still resisting hands from her wrap and



threw himself beside her.

When he arose he put his hand to his face and found it bleeding from the scratches she had inflicted. He brushed his clothes. A button was torn from his jacket. It would be difficult to replace the button. It was one of a fine set given him by Sophia but he did not dare look for it, fearing that the girl at his feet would arise and vent her vengeance on him.

Senya and Valodja came down to find Manya fastening her hair which was a mass of black disarray. She had just brushed her skirt down so that once more it covered her knees. Anger and fear mingled in her heart and sight of Valodja, Valodja the silent, by her side, turned all her rage to tears. It was gratefulness, for his presence was his first word of his feelings for her.

His words moved her.

"Oh, it's so good Valodja, that you are here; you who are so silent and far from me."

And to reassure him (for why should she burden him who had so many matters of his own concern?) she held up a gleaming button and said with a forced show of pride, "See what I took from him? And he'll never come again, I can tell you."

Their questions as to what happened served only to draw over her the calmness of her usual manner. She thrust the button into her pocket and took up the scythe, giving it a vigorous thrust in the same breath with which she answered Valodja, "No, no, nothing. He did not do anything. I drove him off."

#### IV.

Lieutenant Fiodr's sudden removal from their house was a painful surprise to Manya's parents. But there could be no asking of questions—the honored sir desired and it was so.

To Second Lieutenant Vladimir and Leon, however, this action was corroboration of the story told them by Fiodr. "She was a fury," he said, pointing to the scratches. "But I got her. Too bad she's made that way. I'd like to stay over at her house if you could do anything with her."

It was curious that the missing button should have troubled Lieut-

enant Fiodr as much as it did. But because he had not rid himself completely of the thought of Sophia he could not rid himself of the thought of this token of her, which was of the set she had given him. And careless though his talk of Sophia might become at any time, just now the missing button was very much in his thoughts. The set had been her parting gift to him before their quarrel and sometimes, when he thought back, the buttons fastened his mind on that very pleasant period before the quarrel.

"Wonder what Sophia Lentine would say?" asked Second Lieutenant Leon, who because he was sharing his room with the lieutenant felt more familiar now.

"Sophia Lentine is a little fool. What does she know of a soldier's life anyway? You'd think she wanted us to grow wings and twang harps by the way she talks. If I'm not good enough for her as I am—well I'm not, that's all."

And as if to prove to himself that he was really careless of what Sophia Lentine thought of him, he brusquely tore her photograph which he was transferring from his case to his table in Lieutenant Leon's room. This was the first sign of the reaction that was setting in after the affair with Manya. The brusqueness of the act was of a kind with the sudden decision that he had to give his uniform, minus a button, to his valet, Alexiff. A force from within impelled him to throw off this suit, to rid himself of a feeling of struggling arms that seemed to batter and tear, invisibly, at his breast when he wore it.

Within Lieutenant Fiodr's mind a series of strange developments was taking place. As each thought grew and rounded, taking no matter what distant and circuitous lines, the core of it was Manya.

Her calmness, her refusal to seem to notice or even to bestow on him a sign of enmity, made him uneasy at first and filled him gradually with fear. He would look upon Manya as he passed her, hoping, curiously enough, that in her eyes he might see a shadow of a frown, or on her lips a sign of bitterness. She looked at him blankly, as if he were not.

He wondered, watching her coldness, whether under the smoothness of that surface there was not a rot of emotion which ran to bitterness toward him. Had she told anyone? If not, what could it mean? Was she herself planning to give vent to the wrath which he had so

effectively stilled with that strong, sudden blow on the head?

The fear of her which was a negative thing, for it had nothing really definite to go by, crept into him like an intruder whose presence was disagreeable. It was with him so constantly that soon the whole village breathed for him the same disquieting atmosphere.

When his companions, the young lieutenants who were taken up with gaieties that they created for themselves among the peasants of the village, would tease him about Manya, saying that no doubt she was waiting for him, he tossed the whole matter off as a joke.

"Yes, indeed," he drawled, "waiting for me, no less." His laughter appealed to his companions as showing his wit, but it could not still the unrest that was inside of him and which he felt stir and turn over and clutch as though it were something alive.

His distrust of Manya led him to impatience with himself. To relieve his uneasiness there came the hope of receiving orders that the troops should leave the town. It was too much to hope that they would be recalled to Kharkov.

His mind was in this state when there came a letter from Sophia Lenine. The tone of the letter was more than friendly, for Sophia in fact implored him to forgive her and to regard her rejection of his marriage proposal as unspoken. She wished so warmly to have him back for, foolish boy that he was, did he not see that she loved him truly and that nothing he had ever done could undermine her love?

The thought of Sophia's letter was a pleasant relief. It was the open sesame to a cave of recollections that glowed under the lamps of his desire. Immediately it gave new color to his imaginings. He saw himself back in Kharkov, found himself in the gay, light-hearted company of Sophia, recalled the stir of admiring curiosity in the eyes of those who watched Sophia and him at the ballroom, discovered again the indolent restfulness that used to flow in his being like a warm, pervading liquid.

It would be a good thing to get back to Kharkov, back to Sophia. Besides, it would be going back with the air of a victor, in answer to Sophia's urgent appeal. The vanity that ran strongly in his veins was stimulated by the thought. He began to build for himself little fantasies that pleased him for the sense of mastery that they left with him. Oh he would permit Sophia to learn just how masterful he was.

He had asked for her hand; she had rejected him. That was all to the matter as far as he was concerned. Then she called him back. Well, was not this going back a concession? True, he was glad to go, but Sophia would have to show that she understood what his coming back meant.

The lieutenant's star of good favor was in the ascendant. A week after he received the letter from Sophia, asking him to return, his command was ordered to rejoin the main troops at Kharkov which were to begin training for the spring maneuvers.

## V.

Night after night, her work done, Manya would go up the hill to the sheltering clump of trees before Valodja's home. But now her calmness was only a garment that covered the tumult within her. She had felt the first faint stirring of a life that was not of her volition, and at the same time she felt coming upon her a growing insistence, the yearning and need for Valodja.

The thought of Valodja filled her life.

The crops had long been taken in. She had helped store the winter supplies in the white-walled barn. In former years there had been shawls to knit and wraps to sew for her mother and herself, but now she was filled with a restlessness that would not let her spend her days in this occupation. A sense as of longing was with her and made her ill-content with everything. It was as if everything were out of order. The pleasure that had been hers when she sat in the sun-filled room of all-work in her home, was now no longer alive for her.

But she was not really discontented. Beneath the restlessness, swinging like a slow tide that moved steadily in its set course, was the feeling for Valodja. If only he would call to her, how everything would then run smoothly, how well satisfied she would become once more. In itself the thought was one that brought a tinge of warmth and set her imagination glowing. She saw herself working the fields with this great, kind man who would be her man; she saw herself walking hand in hand with Valodja down the hilly road which led past her home.

It was like a singing within her, this thought of herself and Valodja. She saw his great imperious walking down the road, and a



sharpness reached her heart when she recalled the first time she caught his backward glance. Had he not seen then that she wanted him to take her, that she wanted to go to him?

Why had she not thrown herself upon Valodja that time after the assault, when Valodja and Senya had come down to her in the fields? Why had she not then spoken to Valodja to make him see that she knew what was going on in his heart and that her own heart was yearning to him? But she could not overcome the feelings that had kept her from speaking at that time and which had bid her keep silence since.

All in good time would come the telling of her love to Valodja. Nothing about him could be forced or hurried as a harvest could not be hurried or the melting of the winter snows. But it was her knowledge that beneath this calm, Valodja's heart was also alive with feeling for her that brought her a measure of contentment.

This it was that led her feet to the house on the hill. To be near him, to hear the clatter of the boards with which he was building; to see his huge body come into the lamp light in his movements about the room, in these sights and sounds of his presence there was delight for her.

She had hoped that after that time when he had shown something of his feelings, Valodja would soften towards her in his outward manner, that he would greet her as it would have pleased her to be greeted by him. It had pained to see that Valodja resumed the same bearing toward her that he had always had. But her belief that she had read his feelings did not leave her, and so she could hope.

What would he say when she told him about the lieutenant? Had she better tell him? Again, as she stood there, watching with keen eyes Valodja's movements in the half darkness, there shot through her all the questionings to which she had been subjected in the days following the discovery that there was a life within her. Was it wise to tell? If she did tell him would he turn from her or would he understand and help her to do what she had already made up her mind to do: get rid of the baby?

The thoughts riding through her, bringing the fear that she might lose Valodja, made her tremble with agony. If she did not tell, Valodja need never know. She would hide the fact from everyone by binding herself as she had heard some of the girls did. But should

she keep from speaking the truth? And, if later, through some mishap Valodja should learn, what then?

Why had she not heeded the warning of the lieutenant's looks and glances at her? Why had she laughed off the warning brought to her by Senya? Now all the questions that she knew to be futile kept pouring into her mind, filling it with a seething despair. There came reproach for her indifference and the thought even came that had she confided to Valodja, he would early have taught the lieutenant to keep away from her. In his strength he would have found some way to keep the lieutenant from molesting her.

To rid herself of the questionings and to escape the despair that was seizing upon her, she strained her eyes into the closing darkness. Valodja, he was so good, so strong, he would take her love; he would take her and keep her with him. It could not be otherwise. In her heart she was sure of this, sure that she had seen into the depths of his feelings for her.

She was not startled when his voice came from the darkness:

"Manya, will you come here?"

It was like an answer within herself to all the thoughts of her own mind. She walked out from the trees and as she was stumbling across the stones before his house, she felt his hand reach out to her and place itself firmly about her waist. He drew her gently up to him, and in the light of the open doorway she caught his glance full upon her, his indifference all spent and her own feelings reflected deep in his look.

"Valodja," she said, "I have so wanted to come here, to be with you. Why did you not ask me to come? Did you not know I wanted this?"

In a glance she had taken in sight of the new room, its new brick stove white-washed and clean, a well-bedded divan beside the opposite wall, with here and there a gleam of fresh, clean planks with which Valodja had built it. Would this be home to her now? The soil of the hard-beaten floor exuded an atmosphere of spring warmth that filled her pleasantly.

"I knew, Manya, that you would come to me. I knew you were there waiting for me. It is good to have you."

And then under the friendliness of his look, the feeling that she

had won to restfulness that would drive from her all the uneasiness, carried her on to an expression of all she had thought.

"I don't know. I couldn't tell you at that time. How I feared that lieutenant. Yet I could never come to you and tell you what had happened. And I didn't know what had happened to me. He hit me over the head. And now I have a child. But I shall get rid of it. I shall go far from here and when I come back, will you have me?"

His silence and bearing quieted her. Was he lost to her? The question filled her and in her throat and breast she felt a choking that made breathing difficult.

Valodja took her by the hand. "Manya, Manya, why did you not tell me sooner? When he was yet here? I would have—" His two strong hands closed firmly with crushing power.

## V1.

Spring in the fields called Manya out to the new round of the year's work and again she was active in the pale light of the early sun. Working in the fields, walking along the plowed up ridges of breathing brown soil, she would grow conscious of the stirring within her.

And all of the time she felt that Valodja's care was over her. His anxious glance was upon her when he joined her in the fields near her father's home and in his silence she felt that he spoke to her.

She had taken what means she could, to hide the state of her being from those about her. But now a new tide of thought set in. Should she rid herself of this baby she had not wanted, but which now that it was within her, was becoming one with her? A new tenderness was filling her. From the sight of the growing fields and the pale blossoming of trees in the orchards and on the roadsides there came to her a nearness to growing life that filled her with troubled thoughts. This little life, when it came, what should she do with it? She had heard of one girl outside of the village who, taken with child, had, in frightened despair, crushed the life out of her baby at birth. The thought sent a shudder through her. She would never do such a thing. But what should she do? She thought again and again that she might keep the baby, make it her own. But it seemed as if her whole mode of life rose up against this. Her life since she had left childhood behind her and since the ripening

within herself of the instincts of motherhood, had been free of all easy contact with the men of the village who sought her. Had she not herself taken pride in the name "The Colt?" And now, this? How then could she walk through the village street with all men to stare at her, their glinting eyes to say things which they had never dared put into words? And the girls, yes, even the two girls whose ears she came near to box when they came to her from the lieutenants, would they not look at her with laughing eyes?

The feeling grew stronger that she would love to keep the baby, but always there came before her the laughing eyes of the village, the tongues in the cheeks of the men and boys and the smothered chuckles of girls who had learned to keep away from her because she would not join them with the soldiers.

When Manya felt that the time was coming when she would have to do something about the baby, she went to her mother. The old woman who had laughed with pleasure that the lieutenant should have seemed taken up with her daughter, was now outraged. She was overcome with wrath but was made calm by Manya's quiet speaking.

"Mother, your anger will not help me, now," Manya said. "This is what I want you to do. I must go away to some city and there I shall leave the baby—at a foundling house perhaps. Can you come with me? That I should want very much."

Again the old woman began to sway her head and to mutter her anger at the lieutenant. Manya went on:

"You see, mother, Valodja will marry me. We have spoken of it together. Can we not go—we will say to visit his sister in Drubno—to some city not very far off and stay a while, then come back here?"

"Then we shall tell your father it is to Drubno we go, to Valodja's sister for you are to marry Valodja." She paused and looked closely at Manya. "And so you are going to marry Valodja? And you love him well? But of course you do." And the old woman turned away, pleased and at the same time distressed, thinking of what to tell her husband.



## VII.

Lieutenant Fiodr's return to Kharkov was in many ways a triumph. First, his superior officers, after inspecting his troops, commended him on the fine appearance of his men. They praised him for the precision with which they performed their various drills, and to cap the climax, informed him that his promotion to a captaincy was on its way to him.

Second, and this was of even greater consequence to Captain Fiodr (with what delight in the word, he repeated his new title) was Sophia's welcome. He had looked forward to a show of enthusiasm on her part, but his imagination went a-begging. She was all a flood of self-giving; she seemed to pour herself out in ecstatic volubility, in caresses that were endless and full of delicate suggestions. He had known her displeasure months ago, but now first learned the full force of her impetuous nature.

With a wild rush and leap she had welcomed his coming into her home. Her eyes seemed to blaze up with a joyous fire that communicated to her cheeks and throat and to the sides of her delicate forehead. She flung her arms about his head and drew his face down crushingly to her own so that he felt the flux of heat in her cheeks. And all the while her voice was purring softly, carrying little intonations that revealed her feelings at every turn.

"Oh, Fiodr!" her voice pleaded. "What a bad man you are. How could you come back and without even wearing those lovely buttons for your uniform. I know what you shall do. Wait, when you become a captain, then you shall put those buttons on. Yes, you will, you darling." And she crushed his lips on hers so that she did not see the quizzical look in his eyes.

"Nonsense, Sophia. How can you ask such a thing?" Then in a tone, both conciliatory and explanatory, "How could I wear the buttons when I lost one out there in that uncivilized wilderness. I could not think of wearing an imperfect token of one so perfect as you, my darling. When I lost that button, I gave the suit—it was an old one—to Alexiff."

Her eyes showed that she was hurt and for a moment her spirits lost their wings.

"Yes, you'll see Alexiff when he comes in later. I could not think of wearing those buttons. But you'll get me another set for the 'Captain', won't you, dear?"

But if she thought any more about the buttons, Sophia said nothing just then. Instead, there was a ball being given by Baron Dolisk and she was so eager to have him come. Yes, really she had hardly been out in all the time he was away, bad boy that he was.

That was the beginning of the glowing, exhilarating social life that Captain Fiodr loved so much. Everywhere Sophia and he were made the center of a circle of brilliantly gowned women and men who were circumspect in every move. Ah, yes, it was good to be away in the wilderness for a time, so that one's taste might sharpen in the interval. If thought of Manya ever crossed his unthinking mind, it was like a rose-colored cloud wreath across a glowing, sun-filled sky.

There were dances to which Sophia and he were invited; there were balls given in his honor—the exile returned from dreary distant lands. And, although this did not stir him to new impulses of enthusiasm, there were Sophia's eager plans and discussions of their coming marriage.

On the whole, Captain Fiodr, as he was now being called by his friends even before he got his official notification and the new band on his shoulder, knew that he was a lucky fellow. His face said as much in the easy smile that flitted from lip to eye and then spread over all of his handsome features.

What pleased him greatly was the new privilege of riding well ahead of his company when the troops went out on parade. And Spring manoeuvres seemed to be all parade as far as he could see. Now it was riding out of the armory, through the town and out to the open drill grounds on the outskirts of Kharkov, past the various city institutions with their windows full of pretty, young nurses and admiring patronesses; now it was back, over the same route, into the city and past the rows and rows of men and women, who, it seemed to him, displayed good sense in their close and steady scrutiny of his good figure and face.

Manya saw him one day when he was leading his company past the Kharkov Foundling Asylum. She had just reached the sidewalk in front of the house and was thinking that it would be a good home for the baby. Then she saw Lieutenant Fiodr. She had no resentment

toward him, but there came a strange desire to follow him, to learn where he lived. She pointed him out to her mother and then made haste to quiet the old woman. "Now, now, mother. What good is it to curse and groan? Just you go on back to the house (they were stopping at a little inn). I shall come back later."

Captain Fiodr did not know to what trouble he was putting Manya. With firm but rather slow steps she walked along the street, her eyes now and then lifted to the well-formed back of the Lieutenant. She was disturbed when she saw that the troops were making for the armory. But then she saw the Lieutenant dismount and throw his reins to the orderly. She recognized Alexiff, and looking closely saw that he was wearing a uniform with one button missing. "Oh, the button," she thought, and remembered the button in her long wrap which her mother had brought for her after the confinement. It was the one she had worn that day in the field. But here her thoughts were cut off when she saw the Lieutenant start away. He seemed to know so many people, and she was thankful for this, for his stopping every now and then to greet them gave her a chance to keep him in sight. It was a fine house he entered, and as she turned away, its appearance and position well stamped on her mind, she saw a white hand at the long, glass door. "Servants, too," she thought, making the idea link up with some vague plan that was forming in her mind. Sophia was for the wedding at once. Her pleading was so impetuous, her manner so pretty and her caresses so carrying that Captain Fiodr almost yielded. But he did hold out until he would receive his notice and get his uniform. Of course, he might have gotten his uniform before, but it would be so fine to get his papers and then go down to the tailors and have himself measured . . . a new man . . . that's what it would be like.

Sophia did not tell him that she had her own plans for that uniform. Of course she agreed with him that it was perfectly lovely of him not to have continued to wear her buttons after he had lost one of them. The darling. Who but Fiodr could have put it so nicely: "How could I wear an imperfect token of one so perfect as you?" The dear boy. Yet—and she knew she was sentimental, but she didn't care—she did want him to wear the buttons, for they went back so decidedly to the time before their horrid quarrel. How wonderfully

he had looked, their silver gleaming against his blue lieutenant's garb. And now she would get him to wear the buttons as a Captain for at least one day, and in that way carry over to his new rank the feelings that were hers when he was just Lieutenant Fiodr.

When a week later, on the day of the wedding, she turned her appealing eyes upon Alexiff, he forgot the brusqueness and haste with which Lieutenant Fiodr had thrown the uniform, minus one button, to him. He knew only that now the Captain's lady came to him and pleaded with him that for one day she be permitted to remove the buttons from his master's old uniform. How simple that was, with her rich, dark eyes smiling at him!

Sophia trusted to the magic of her eyes to win Fiodr over, also. He bounded up to the room where he was to discard his lieutenant's uniform and don that of a captain. A sudden storm of anger burst within him at the sight of the buttons. There was something taunting in the fact that they had been so placed in the uniform that there was one missing—exactly as he had missed it after leaving Manya—

"Alexiff, you fool!" he shouted from his room, but it was Sophia who came to the door, and it was her soft hand stroking his reddened face, and bright, flaming eyes that looked into his and calmed him.

"Boy, what a spoiled boy this is," she spoke softly. "How he can bellow, and all because Sophia pleads for one little, sweet favor. As for that button, why not change them around so that it won't be noticed?"

When she whispered her reasons, patting his face and shoulders, he subsided. He was learning that her wishes had an impetus that forced them through.

Dowstairs the guests were gathering. There were Lieutenants Leon and Vladimir, those good fellows who had helped make life pleasant out there. There were a few other Captains and their wives and a few intimate friends. The real wedding party would foregather later in the week, when they could manage to have all of their brilliant friends down.

The young Lieutenants smiled in recognition of the buttons. But they greeted the new Captain with fervor. Sophia was beautiful to see, her eyes like sparkling fires and her cheeks warmly flushed. There was so much noise of talk and laughter, and at the farthest end of the



large chamber there was the full-toned harmony of the music, so that the ringing of the door bell was not heard except by Alexiff.

When he returned from opening the door, he carried a compact little bundle. It was firmly put together, yet seemed soft and yielding, and for all its wrappings was loose at the narrow end.

He was about to take it up the stairs when he noticed a strange thing. Fastened to the outer covering of the bundle—he now felt this to be of soft texture and not of paper, as he had supposed—there was a button. Why, it was the missing button, the very one from the Lieutenant's coat.

He started down the stairs and to the large chamber. "Captain, your Highness . . . my Lord Captain . . . here is your button returned."

Sophia had heard the word and instantly she stood beside Alexiff. How curious that the button should be sewed on to the wrapper, and then there was a slight stirring in the bundle.

Captain Fiord stood by. A trembling seized his hands and made him hold them behind his back, for he knew that they would quiver. "The button! The button! Many! How had she known? What did this mean?" He looked at Sophia opening the bundle. There on the table was a baby, a wrinkled-faced infant boy, wrapped in rough, peasant dresses.

"Sophia," he tried to say, "Sophia, think, here's the button." He could not help catch the gleam that flickered in the eyes of the Lieutenants nor the understanding glance of Sophia as she caught their eyes.

"Why, yes, the button," she said. "What a perfect token!" Her pause was not at all suspicious to those about her. Her voice, sounding faint and hollow, went on almost without her guidance: "This is Captain Fiord's button come back, which he lost in the wilderness."

## NOTATIONS

By JAMES RENNEL

### I.

**L**EONARDO is perhaps the most striking example of an artist who knew how to harness science to his art without losing quality. In Leonardo, so far as we know—and surely his works tell us this!—the human spirit merely used the science it had found; it spoke eloquently through it as if it were another term of speech, and so enriched the medium with a deepening beauty. Sometimes science becomes a thing to be worshipped and obeyed in itself, as if a method were an end. That is bad; it can never be anything but a method for the artist. Leonardo's interest in the objective world was so intense that for all his use of science, he never became dry or denaturalized. He was complete master of his materials.

The great danger today is the denaturalization of nature with the effect of two extremes in art—a flat realism (popularly so-called) which conveys the bankruptcy of the spirit and its lack of power to absorb and use the objective world; and anarchy of the spirit, which casts the objective world overboard to use nature merely as a means of expressing symphonies instead of seeking the inherent rhythms of nature itself: using nature as a means, instead of respecting it as a force which binds man to the totality of things and of which he is a part, is itself a sign of weakness, decadence.

Today there is another revolt away from the coarse fact of the outside world with its powers and machines that oppress and palsy man's spirit: the desire to bring the human gesture into play against the stern regularity of the machine. Our furniture, our tools and our houses are machined; but they were once hand-made and humanly expressive before the machine—which was good because the eye is refreshed and charmed with the rough or smoothly-expressive work of the hand, for the hand moves to the rhythm of man's spirit and so he finds peace and happiness in its full expression; man is always seeking his place and function on the earth. Of the machine and its possibilities at present I shall not

speak. The effect of it, in spite of its frequent excellence in design and the satisfaction one finds in its effectiveness, is clearly brutal and cold; but it need not always be so. At present it is, and steel makes up much of the armor of the modern world. There is a desire upon the part of the sensitive captive artist who feels himself alien in this modern stage to repudiate it and go back to real form and expression. And how does he do this?—in one way by expressionism, which willfully thrusts the fancy forward egocentrically and shuts out the fact or truth of science in a kind of hysterical day-dream. The starved sensibility and checked rhythmic movement of the mind twists the straight walls of a house or the regularity of a stairs to the impulse of its own rhythm and so tries to make them humanly significant—the imprint of man on dumb dead things. But the result of this egocentric passion is willful and grotesque, and peculiarly a phantastic German product. (The history of the modern philosophy of will and power against the severe modern background—severe in a different sense than the Greek—is worthy of study and annotation.) Or else, in derision at the modern mechanical man (for so he describes him) the expressionist portrays him as a purely mechanical thing that laughs in tune with the other empty propelled modern machines, the puppets of an empty world!

But is this the best means? There is no definite answer to that, for every artist will express himself and his revolt in his own way. Let him be an artist and a master of his medium, and then he may do as he pleases, as the authentic vision impels! He may even give us cartoons and bloodless mechanical men, for derision at the modern state of things is what we need. But if he is an artist and has a love of truth, which is not only the artist's truth, but the logic and character of the modern world? What then? What if the human factor is not essential to him?

It would be best for him to start with Leonardo, for science may be used as a hand-maiden of art, though she be a risky hand-maiden with the ambition and tyrannies of a taskmaster.

Science can serve art when it is used and then obliterated as a means, respected as a method because it can enrich by the insights that it gives; it is good and necessary only for that reason. It may satisfy something deep in the modern spirit; it may train the eye and discipline the will; but any science, any form of acrobatics, can do that, too.

There is a first discipline of the artist, which goes without saying.

Of course it is possible to neglect the logic of the external world and paint wilfully, but that is deliberately simplifying a world and casting man into a mould of mechanical toys. No doubt he can be cast so; there are simplifications that express a purposeful naiveite and simplifications that suggest more of mystery and fineness than fineness itself; but that is coming around to a rich expression in another manner. When we use science in modern art—not only anatomy, but logic, etc., etc.—the subject may be made to speak with more authority to us, men of this modern age. The artist will be wise enough to know that logic is there to be smashed; just as a good psychologist, who is an artist, knows when it is possible to cast psychology overboard (when it is purely scientific and obstructs the reach of his vision). But one can always perceive if the artist has that knowledge and if the artist's hand is skilfully putting it aside to make better use of his materials; just as Dos-toevsky, who is a psychologist, is above it, and Sherwood Anderson, who is not, is squirming and gasping under its burden: like most Americans, Anderson knows too much and has absorbed too little into the integrity of his being.

In brief there is no one road to Mecca, no one way to do a thing. . . . America is suffering at present from those benevolent critics, who are pointing out the one and only way because perhaps they haven't the breadth of human experience and the passion to be artists. If they had, they would simply say: "Artists, find yourselves and realize your vision." That comes first. The critic's way is bigotry. What we desire is to point out a train of thought, and show wherein the modern spirit, and particularly the American spirit, suffers paralysis; and how to overcome this—that is, by absorption and a recreation of our universe. If we haven't the spiritual power to destroy what obstructs us *in fact*, we can do so and are always doing so in art; and building a new life and a clean logic on the ruins. If we do not seek this grand tragic beauty of destruction, but first and foremost the sources of a natural life, there are still lovely hills and meadows, and the blue-vetch, daisy and golden-rod bloom as well as ever they did a thousand years ago, and shall probably bloom there for another thousand years. Perhaps for this reason they contain the deepest secret for the artist. Each flower,



being in itself beautiful, contains a "portion of immortality." It has achieved its vision. This "immortality" is not expressed in infinities of time, but in the infinities of the mind of man . . . which brings us to the problem of the physiology of beauty in relation to man. This does not concern us at present. It requires a sheaf in itself, and once learned, it is best forgotten.

## II.

All nature whispers her secrets to the artist, and he weaves his web for her. The mathematician interprets symbols and he builds an edifice with them. This is a different kind of art. There is a near relation between the two aesthetics; both are based on logic; but between one logic and the other there are infinities. In both logics there is passion. It is the greatest mistake to think that the mathematician is not passionate. He is the most passionate of all, so passionate that he has to keep his passions in control and let them seep up into the mind, there to glow in cold incandescence; and, above all, he must keep his imagination strictly within bounds. The romantic artist has more freedom, his whole body is warm; he is fancy-free; but the result is a lack of concentration and so a diffusion of his powers. He, too, must keep himself within bounds if he is to follow the logic of his art. In the end, the mathematician, being better trained and longer disciplined, can carry his imagination more boldly into further regions; and in his explorations he never has the populace at his heels to check him or sweep him from his purpose: his art is still one of the aristocratic professions: he is judged by his peers in whatever country. The natural artist is nearer the earth, more of the people and for the people, but only when he builds on the solid foundation of his own scene and transforms it in the gleam of his imagination (not by borrowing or exploiting foreign forms until they are a part of his equipment and imagination) does he achieve a form; and in his concrete instances there are worlds of generalities, symbols. Here the scientist and artist meet.

## III.

After only a casual reading of philosophy it is evident that the intellect sooner becomes a slave than the emotions. The intellect, once

having produced a concept, worships it superstitiously, and does not inquire into the impulse that bred it. The stream becomes frozen; the water runs underneath all unbeknown. But the emotions, which have their own integrity, are the first to rebel. Nearer the sources, they see the disparity between the fact and the symbol which is supposed to interpret it. The emotions, which have a musical structure, are the first to feel a discord. And so it happens that the poets are the first of revolutionists as well as philosophers. To rationalists, the impulses of such men as Rousseau and Nietzsche are barbaric, and they end by attacking the intellect or character of the men. But it is this touch of barbarism which shakes the superstructure and brings it down to earth. A new revelation creates the foundations of another superstructure, and it is to this that the later rationalists turn, neglecting the process which brought it about and taking the superstructure for the whole fact. This is the irrational fallacy of rationalists. Blake, a poet, has the finest words to say about the reasoning faculty:

"Reason, or the ratio of all we have already known, is not the same that it shall be when we know more."

"From a perception of only three senses or three elements none could deduce a fourth or a fifth."

"The desires and perceptions of man untaught by anything but organs of sense must be limited to objects of sense. Therefore God becomes as we are, that we may be as He is."

"Man, by his reasoning power, can only compare and judge of what he has already perceived."

A certain German philosopher required about six hundred pages to say the same thing, and then he perverted it. We prefer Blake's brief axiomatic method. Truths about man and his world, particularly those truths which touch the abysses, cannot be told completely. The mind can simply make a notation, and that notation which starts the imagination into a flare is better than pages and pages of exposition which never touches the imagination at all. In one line of Blake there are concentrated years of terrible and beautiful experience. The crass rationalist is aware of no such experience and mystery.

And so observe! our remarks are merely brief notations—signposts showing the direction the mind is taking, poor lame ghosts struggling toward the light. They do not tell the whole story.

#### IV.

Artists once upon a time (and even in France today), when they achieved greatness, were called MASTERS. How much lies in that in explaining the artist! People called him master: that meant he had mastered his materials, he understood the force and character of the contemporary world and used it in his own way; and whatever his manner and his philosophy, when in the act of creation, he rose above the contemporary world to plant his own vision of things upon it, thereby enriching the life about him gloriously. He clothed the naked skeletons of men. He was never trivial or mean, small and despairing, for observe his strength was Herculean and he was a master! Master of what? Everything he touched and thought upon. Yet he did not turn rude and possessive hands on things, but rather mastered through the understanding. He never thrust his own egoism forward to disrupt a harmony or color a world with his vainglory: that is for the weak, the egocentric: he always waited for the hint from things themselves and saw into their character; his art was consequently not an addition, but a growth. He was rational in the sense that Blake was and had a sound sense of proportion: he knew that the egoist only thrusts forward what he has borrowed in the first place; but so much else is there of which he is a part. No man is separated from the earth or other man; and when man is wise he is aware that he is a part of things. So, in this masterly moral judgments never found a home, no matter how useful in the social life of the time, because he dealt with the sterner laws of the gods themselves. In every lake and every tree there was a god. Blake wanted to write a Bible of Hell to add to the other and restore an equilibrium. He, having a fine sense of cosmic justice, simply wanted to give the devil his due. Perhaps his nature was more moral than dramatic. He knew that he himself was merely a receptacle into which the gods poured their secrets in solitudes. How different this attitude from that of the tyrants of the temporal world who call themselves masters! But the true master of the world is such in the sense that the master-craftsman is, and so is himself an artist.

Blake was a master, and few realize it yet. Nietzsche tried to be a master, but he tried and insisted too much, and so got in the way of himself. He was too much an egoist and intolerant at bottom.

He thought he could bully man and nature into his mould. The master is rarely a bully (Nietzsche himself, however, being the exception). He woos nature like a lover, and so wins her secrets from her, and is grateful and smiles. Knowing the source of his impulse he takes care not to bully or abuse it, but lets his great imagination play upon it according to the dictates of his inmost vision, which some masters, from Plato onward, like to call the vision of God. Such was their mixed humility. In the end they became proud and vainglorious, simply because they were chosen. So it often comes about that a creator like Plato, or the men who wrote the Bible, are the most furiously proud. In this they are akin to the priesthood, who also call themselves the chosen. There is no end to human dualism and perversity: a man will bend the knee to gods and lord it over man! Perhaps such a man is the greatest egoist: he may call himself an egoist by right of God! At any rate, he is Herculean. He is a master.

#### V.

We have used the phrase "clean logic" in a former paragraph. By this we mean honest, authentic thinking in contradistinction to the popular logic current among us. It has to do with morals fundamentally. Our popular conception of the good (around which the personal mind swings) is that which brings in profits first of all and has nothing to do with the quality of a thing; and in this very fact lies the source of so much hypocrisy, wrong morals and bad thinking. All of the public clowns who uphold this attitude and the state that fosters it are minor Nietzscheans; that is, in practice. What Nietzsche did fundamentally was to sublimate power, but in *practice* power has different meanings and different ways of asserting itself. The word "power" requires a dictionary of exposition. Anyway, we know what power means in the United States. An artist born among such hypocritical conditions and rooted lies will feel himself lost for the first few years in a chaotic world. The artist is involved in economics and morality to a degree he little realizes; but he, of course, should be concerned with morality in a wide sense, not merely the narrow sex-morality which is the passion (for and against or both together) of powerful and perverted peoples. What we need is a cleansing, a good riddance to the romantic worship of



power. To call this popular attitude logic at all, when it is simply industrial romancing, is merely a whim.

No honest artist can earn a living in the industrial life as it is at present; he may with a certain integrity become a laborer, and then he will worship the substratum because the superstructure is rotten; or else he becomes a hypocrite and a pander, an even more slippery knave than the others because he is both weaker and cleverer. We prefer the artist who is an out-and-out thief. Then, at least, he does not deceive himself and keeps the core of him clean. There is such a thing as an honest thief. This type of thief has his own acolytes and worshippers.

The industrial himself knows he is a fraud, and so if he has any shred of honor left, he becomes a philanthropist; and then flatters his egotism both ways. He puts out many coils that strangle the state in his powerful fists: he is the villain of the piece. The American artist has not proved himself much of a hero. Even at his best, as with Melville, he is a giant slowly poisoned in the miasma; sometimes he seems to us to be a giant slain with a feather. And he is the best.

## VI.

In a previous paragraph I have also spoken of infinity in connection with art. A work of art that is complete is infinite, and so, as such, as an organic whole, lodges in the memory, whence the muses come and to which they return. But what do we mean by infinite? We mean that each part fits into the other, and if a line were circumscribed about it, it would go on infinitely. Of a drama I would not say it had a beginning, middle, and end, but rather that it has no beginning or end. It began with the distant beginning of things and will end when the processes of life come to an end. I would say that all living things, once they achieve a form, are infinite. They move in rhythmic circles; the line of a circle is infinite.